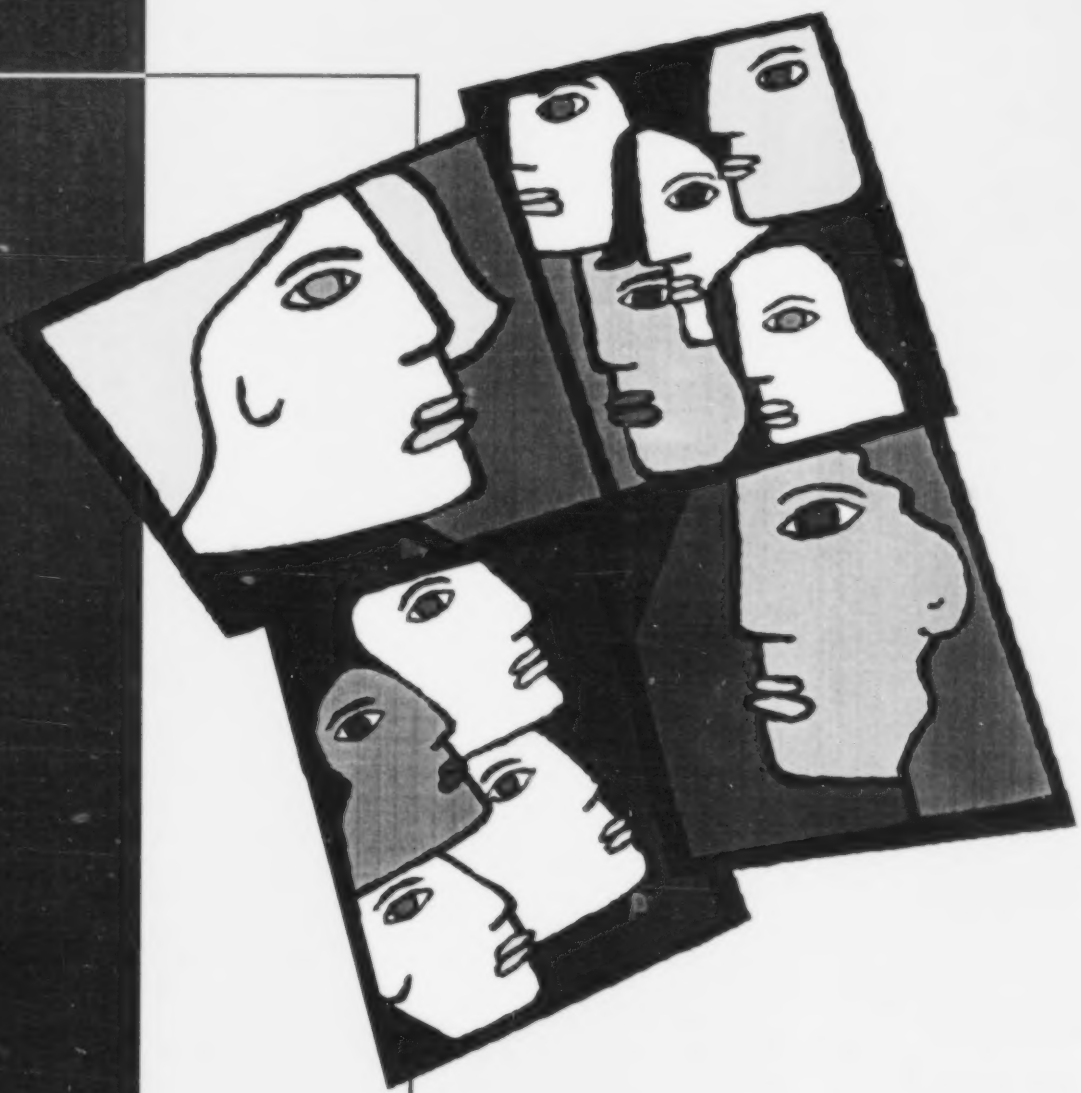
Celebrating Diversity



Respecting Differences

Government of
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Women's Policy Office

Acknowledgements:

This handbook is the result of the work of a number of dedicated advocates for diversity. It was written by Carmelita McGrath, with graphics and layout by Total Communications Inc.. They worked with an Advisory Committee comprised of women in government and community. Members of the Advisory Committee included Beverly Brown, National Anti-Poverty Organization; June MacDonald, Urban Aboriginal Women's Group; Joan Holloway, Seniors Resource Centre; Leslie MacLeod, Independent Living Resource Centre; Melly Swamidas, Multicultural Women's Organization; Heather White, Public Service Commission; Joyce Aylward, Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women; and Jennifer Mercer, Adiat Junaid, Dorothy Robbins and Beth Lacey, Women's Policy Office.

Written by: Carmelita McGrath

Graphics by: Total Communications Inc.

Copyright © 2000 Women's Policy Office

ISBN 1-55146-121-8

This document may be photocopied in whole or in part, with credit to Women's Policy Office, for educational purposes.

105-06951/

Celebrating Diversity, Respecting Differences

Table of Contents

Thinking in Stereotypes 1

How Stereotypes Work 1

Oppression 2

How Oppression Works 3

Sexism 4

Racism 6

Heterosexism 8

Ableism 10

Ageism 12

Classism 14

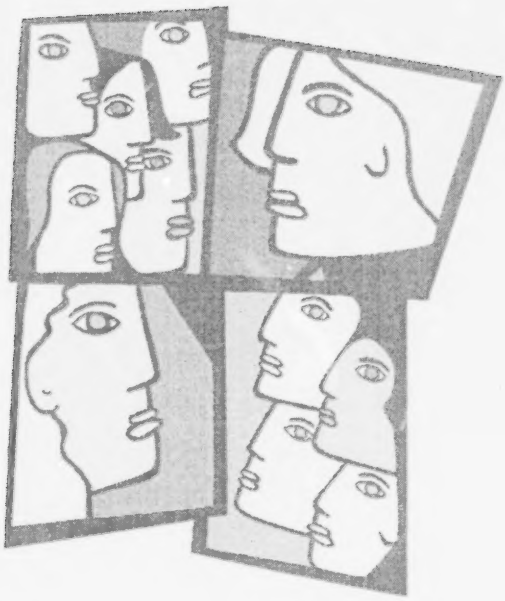
One Ism and Another and... 17

Lifting the Weight of Oppression 17

The Will to Change: A Newfoundland Example 17

The Power of Community 18

Resources and Sources 18



Celebrating Diversity, Respecting Differences

Thinking in Stereotypes

"It appears beggars can be choosers in Canada," a company executive said a while ago. He was talking about Newfoundlanders. Many people in this province have had some experience with this kind of remark. They've had to listen to Newfie jokes, hear comments about "funny accents," or answer the question, "Why don't you people all move where there are jobs now that there's no fish?"

Such comments can make us feel hurt or angry. We see the prejudice behind them. But what about our own prejudices? We all have prejudices of one kind or another. Just try the following exercise.

Imagine you are on a bus full of people. You have nothing to do but sit until you get where you're going. You sit back and relax. Bits of other people's talk drift by you. You hear, "Joan's going to run that marathon." You hear, "Surinder's plane gets in tonight. She'll start going to MUN next week." You hear, "Pat's really trying to do something about the weight problem." We all make pictures in our minds. Did you picture Joan as young? Did you think of Surinder as a foreign student? In your mind's eye, did you see Pat as a woman? What if you were to find out that Joan is 57, Surinder was born in Newfoundland and is coming home after a vacation, and Pat is a man? Would you be surprised?

A stereotype is a general idea about a whole group.

All of us carry stereotypes around with us. We get them from our families and peer groups, from society and from the media. Some stereotypes might seem harmless. But they all keep us from seeing the whole picture. Sometimes they keep us from seeing people for who they are. Always they show us something less than whole, less than real.

How Stereotypes Work

A stereotype is a general idea about a whole group. It is too simple to really reflect how complex people are. Stereotypes do not recognize individual differences. Even stereotypes that seem positive have negative impacts. Stereotypes reduce us all to less than who we are.

Some stereotypes you might have heard...

Black people are really good athletes.
Old people don't like change.
Newfoundlanders are lazy.

Prejudice is a feeling. Prejudice is making a judgment before you know someone well. It is based on stereotypes. Prejudice can prevent trust. You may have heard...

They're on welfare...you can't trust them to pay their rent.
I'm not sure gay teachers are a good influence on our kids.
Why hire him? He'll just quit and go home when he gets enough stamps.

DISCRIMINATION IS ACTION OR BEHAVIOR THAT CAN COME OUT OF STEREOTYPING AND PREJUDICE. Discrimination is the denial of fair treatment or equal rights. Some examples are...

Women applying for jobs with a company are turned down more often than men; the company says they are not "strong" enough to do the work.

A group of teenagers in a store is watched more carefully than others shoppers; after awhile they're told to "move along."

A man goes to a public meeting, only to find there is no wheelchair ramp. He can't have his say because he can't get inside.

There are several different types of prejudice and discrimination. All of them have one thing in common. They all involve claiming difference–saying "we" are not like "them."

SEXISM is prejudice or discrimination based on gender.

RACISM is prejudice or discrimination based on race or cultural background.

HETEROSEXISM is prejudice or discrimination against people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered. It includes homophobia—fear of people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered.

DISCRIMINATION IS THE DENIAL OF FAIR TREATMENT OR EQUAL RIGHTS.

ABLEISM is prejudice or discrimination against people who have disabilities.

CLASSISM is prejudice or discrimination against people because of their class, level or source of income, and social and economic status.

AGEISM is prejudice and discrimination against people because of their age. Both younger and older people can be the targets of ageism.

Together, these forms of discrimination are often called the ISMs. All of them involve the oppression of one group by another.

OPPRESSION

Oppression can show itself in many different ways.

It can be THE FEELING that something–an action or statement–aimed at us is not quite right. It makes us feel somehow hurt or ashamed. A sexist remark is like that. We want to say something back, but we know we might be told we have no sense of humour.

It can be THE BELIEF some children learn early: "I'm not as good as them," a child thinks, comparing him or herself to classmates.

It can be THE DISCOMFORT of entering a room and feeling different or separate, thinking, "I don't belong here. I'm not one of them."

It can be THE FRUSTRATION of going somewhere and facing a door that you can't physically open.

It can be walking home at night to find THE WORD "faggot" chalked on the door, a broken bottle on the doorstep.

It can be A SUBTLE FEELING that doesn't even have a name, or a violent action that destroys a life, halts its progress, or kills its promise.

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Oppression does not come to us naturally. We are not born oppressors. Nor are we born to be oppressed, though many people are born into oppressed situations.

How Oppression Works

For oppression to work, we have to learn some lessons or lies first. To be oppressors we have to learn to believe the lies, or act in ways that do not challenge them. To be oppressed, we have to learn to believe the lies about us. For example, if I am a woman in a bad relationship, and I feel powerless to leave it, then I am oppressed. If I think that my mother who is frail and elderly shouldn't have a say in where she lives, then I am also an oppressor.

Most of us play the roles of oppressor and oppressed at some points in our lives. For oppression to work, several things have to happen.

We claim difference: We learn to call certain other people "them." We see ways they are different from us. We say things like, "I've got nothing against those people. But I don't like the idea of them taking our jobs." Or we talk about gay and lesbian rights, then say, "Mind you, I'm not gay!"

We judge. We decide there's something about "them" that makes them not as good or as worthy or as normal as us. We say things like, "They've got no work ethic. They sit there, watching television, expecting the government to look after them."

We cut off our emotions, our empathy. We believe "they" cannot feel as we do. We see a group with stereotyped qualities, not individual people with feelings. We say things like, "Well, maybe that's all right in their culture, but not here."

We learn fear. We see "them" as a threat. We say things like "That gang of teenagers is trouble waiting to happen."

We accept the status quo, the way things are. Some groups have had power over others for a long time. WOMEN STILL STRUGGLE FOR EQUAL TREATMENT WITH MEN. Human rights laws are still being changed to make more kinds of discrimination illegal.

When we challenge oppression, we are up against a big thing. Oppressive stereotypes spread through our families, schools, churches, community organizations and the media. It can be very difficult to find the truths behind the lies.

The following stories take a closer look at the effects of stereotyping.

As we read them, we can ask ourselves:

What harm does discrimination do?

Is it easier to treat people badly if we see them as "not like us?"

What can we do to change the way things are?

We are not born oppressors.

SEXISM

CAUGHT IN A TIME WARP

Michelle is moping around the house. That's strange for a Friday night.

"Kyle working tonight?" her mother asks.

"Yes," says Michelle, though he isn't. It's not his night at the service station. She isn't seeing her boyfriend tonight because of an incident at school today.

A bunch of them were hanging around outside the cafeteria–Michelle and Kyle and three of Kyle's buddies, Kenny, Luke and Brian.

The swinging doors came flying open and Sandy March walked by. She didn't say a word.

"Oooh, Kenny," the boys said. "There she goes." "She never looked at you."

"Who cares?" Kenny said. "Not me. She's only a slut anyway."

The boys laughed. Michelle poked Kyle in the arm but he didn't notice. Michelle felt her face go red. Sandy was a classmate; Michelle liked her. Kenny's ugly word offended her. She didn't know what to say though. So she kept her mouth shut. The bell rang then.

All afternoon the image stuck with her. Sandy strolling by, Kenny's word, the boys laughing.

"How could you laugh at that?" she asked Kyle later. "That's not what Sandy is. She just broke up with him, that's all."

"Yeah, well," Kyle said. "That's why he's mad."

"Yes, but that's the kind of label that sticks to a girl. It's not fair."

"Oh, it's only a word," Kyle says. "Lighten up. Besides, if she doesn't want to be called that, maybe she shouldn't..."

"Shouldn't what?"

"Shouldn't dress like that. You saw what she was wearing."

Michelle tried to remember what Sandy was wearing. Nothing stuck out in her mind. "What?" she asked again.

"That top," Kyle said. "Cut down to here. Cropped up to there. She's flaunting it."

"It's only a top!" Michelle was angry.

"Well," Kyle said, "Since she broke up with Kenny, she's been out with a lot of guys."

"So what about Kenny? He's been out with a lot of girls. So I guess he's a slut, too."

"Don't be so foolish," Kyle said, "It's not the same thing. Now can we please drop it."

Now, stuck home on a Friday night, Michelle wonders if she over-reacted. She thinks about talking to her mother about it. But she doesn't want to get her mom going. Iris always says, *The more things change, the more they stay the same.* She says, *it's a sexist world out there.* She can always find lots of examples to show how things haven't changed. She thinks Michelle and her friends are fooling themselves if they think all the battles for equality have been fought and won.

Well, haven't they? Michelle has always thought. Can't girls and boys be whatever they want to be now? She thinks her mother, a teenager in the 1970s, just misses her causes and marches. Maybe she's caught in a time warp.

Michelle turns on the TV, flicks through the channels looking for something good. There's a music video on for a band she likes. The lead singer bends low over the microphone. Near him, a young woman in a bikini dances. She rubs her hands over her body. He sings in his tropical shirt.

Michelle flicks to the other music channel. A female pop singer sings her latest hit. The video camera roams over her body, barely stopping at her face.

The word slut comes to Michelle's mind, carried over from the afternoon. She flicks back and forth. The guy keeps singing in his cheerful shirt, his funny hat. The nearly naked women dance. It is the first time in her fourteen years these images have really bothered Michelle.

Some Things Worth Thinking About...

- ❑ On the surface, it might look as if males benefit from sexism. But really everyone loses. Kyle and his friends are also caught in the stereotypes. Kenny can't say how he really feels about Sandy breaking up with him. Instead he has to be "tough."
- ❑ Sexist stereotypes let males express anger while holding back other feelings. What is the danger in this?
- ❑ If the boys start to see Sandy as a "slut," how will they treat her? Is it easier to abuse someone after we've stuck a negative label on them?
- ❑ Sexism runs so deeply through our society we sometimes don't see it. Like Michelle, we are surprised to hear those we care about speak with prejudice.
- ❑ The media depend heavily on sexist images. Sexist stereotypes sell just about everything. Females are rewarded for going along with the stereotypes. Recently, a man picked a wife on a TV show from 50 women ready to marry a stranger for his money. Could this happen in a non-sexist society?

What Can Any of Us Do?

- ❑ We can look beyond the lies about men and women. We can think of each person as just that–a person. We can question assumptions about what it means to be male and female.
- ❑ We can talk and listen. Females and males need to talk about our lives and how they are similar and different. We need to bridge the gaps sexism creates.
- ❑ We can decide not to take part in sexist jokes or remarks. We can try to use language that includes everyone equally. We can treat everyone with respect.
- ❑ We can treat our male and female children equally. We can teach them to question sexist stereotypes.
- ❑ We can challenge sexist attitudes, images and policies. We can keep saying what is wrong with them. We can suggest changes and solutions.

Sexism runs so deeply through our society we sometimes don't see it.

Racism

It Doesn't Happen Here?

It's 6:30 PM and the Bromleys are watching television. There's a horrible incident on the news. A young black man was badly beaten by a group of young white men. The assault is being treated as a "hate crime." In other words, the young man was beaten by racists because he was black.

"Where's that going on, Dad?" Kelly asks as she comes into the room.

"Toronto," Mike says.

"We're having a Stop Racism day at school on March 21," Kelly says. "Schools all over the country are taking part."

"Well," Jill says to her daughter, "At least that kind of thing doesn't happen here. We can be thankful for that. We might have high unemployment and everything. But at least we don't have that."

In another Newfoundland town, the Lees are also watching the news. They, too, are shocked when such violent racist acts occur. But they would never say "it doesn't happen here."

Emma Lee is 11, the same age as Kelly Bromley. She is a third-generation Newfoundlander. But many people do not think of the Lees as Newfoundlanders. They think of them as Chinese. If the Lees had any chance of forgetting their "difference," they were reminded of it not long ago.

The Lees moved from one town to another because Sue had a chance of a better job. Bill works in sales and could get a transfer. All of a sudden it was as if they were new Canadians. Sometimes people were surprised to hear the Lees talking"Newfoundland English." They were surprised when Sue brought lasagna to a potluck.

At school, a girl asked Emma where she was from. "Mount Pearl," Emma said.

"No, where are you *really* from?" asked the girl.

No one means any harm, so what can you say? Sue thinks.

In another town, the Rich family is sitting down to supper. Frank glances at the TV screen before zapping it off. The racist beating catches his eye too. "No big surprise there," he says. "How can the media keep acting surprised?"

Frank has a deep mistrust of TV and of all media. He does not like the images of his people he sees there. Frank, his wife Theresa and their children Peter and Catherine are Innu. Frank feels that they are a people who are never on TV unless there is some trouble, some tragedy.

There have been many suicides among the Innu. Images of desperate young people have been seen on TV screens all over the country. A whole story lies beneath these images, but it has not yet been told. It is a story about a culture taken over by another dominant one. It's a story of a huge loss–the loss of a whole way of life.

Perhaps it's too big a story for TV, Frank thinks. But he is tired of the images his children are given as reality. It is as if the whole world is white when things are going well. The only images of Innu life are of alcoholism, drug abuse or death.

Frank is concerned about what these images might make his children think about themselves. He wants them to see what is good about their culture too.

Some Things Worth Thinking About...

- ❑ Often, white people of European descent deny racism is a problem; they do not want to say "I'm racist." But racism is not one person's problem; it is a problem with the whole society. We need to look at the big picture. Dealing with racism is about finding equality, not guilt.
- ❑ Jill Bromley may think that Newfoundland is not racist because in her community, people are mainly of European descent. This doesn't mean it isn't a racist society. The Lees face racism even when people are being nice to them. Racism runs deep in our past. We keep celebrating European "discovery" of North America though many people already lived here. In the early 1900s, Chinese people were the only immigrants who had to pay a "head tax" to settle here.
- ❑ Sometimes, hard times can bring racist stereotypes out in the open. When we say "we let in too many immigrants" or "they come and take our jobs," we fall into the racist trap of us against them. And aren't we all – except aboriginal peoples – immigrants?
- ❑ On this planet, Asian and African people are not minorities. But what do we see on TV? Does the world on TV look whiter than it is? Are the lives of people of all cultures visible in the media? Or do we often see stereotypes?
- ❑ Innu children are between 3 and 7 times more likely to die before age 5 than other Canadian children. Would this be possible in a non-racist society?

Dealing with racism is about finding equality, not guilt.

What Can Any of Us Do?

- ❑ We can accept our racist past and start to deal with it. We can challenge ourselves and others to focus on change, not guilt. We must be responsible for our own change.
- ❑ We can question what we think about people of all races. What assumptions and stereotypes do we carry around?
- ❑ We can question the picture of the world we see in the media. We can ask: "What's wrong? What's missing?" We can teach our children to question what they see and hear.
- ❑ We can choose to not take part in or accept racist jokes or stories. We can name racism when we hear it. We can use language that includes everyone and hurts no one. When someone else uses a racist term or stereotype, we can say it offends us.
- ❑ We can work to make our workplaces, schools and communities open and welcoming places.

Heterosexism

A Hidden Life

Rose looks at the potluck invitation. "Rose and Guest." For most people it would not be such a big deal. Wouldn't you bring your partner of three years to the staff potluck? But for Rose every invitation like this is a big deal. Last year there were two weddings of friends. It wasn't just a matter of filling out the cards and sending them back. It was a matter of thinking of changing her whole life, giving up privacy, knowing people would be watching her closely. She decided she wasn't ready. Her partner, Eve, wasn't ready either.

At her friend June's wedding, Rose had to get up and speak. They were old friends. She'd known the groom, Tim, since they were in high school too. Rose stood there in her new summer dress and told funny stories about their high school years. But the longer she stood there the more she wanted to escape. Escape or blurt out the truth. She wondered: *how would all those couples feel if they had to keep their relationships secret?*

Rose came out to her family as a lesbian two years ago. Eve had become too important. How could Rose hide a good, probably long-term relationship from her close family? Her family supported her. She got the feeling they were relieved they didn't have to guess anymore. One of her grandmothers can't get used to the relationship, though. She can't look at Rose and Eve together. In her religion, their relationship is sinful.

When Rose thinks of coming out to her co-workers, she wonders which grandmother they'll be like, the one who can accept her life or the one who can't. She thinks some of them know. Others, she's sure, don't. Then there's Peter.

When she first started working at her job, Peter asked her out a couple of times. She said no, thanks. She thought she was nice about it. He didn't like being turned down, though. She felt he watched her more closely. One day, he said something about "lezzies" just loud enough for her to hear. He has made a couple of other remarks since.

Rose thinks it might be easier to come out if she worked somewhere else. But she teaches high school. She's knows there are many stereotypes. She knows that some people think that gay and lesbian teachers try to influence young people to "turn," as if being lesbian or gay were only a matter of being convinced.

Although it is no longer legal to discriminate against someone because they are gay or lesbian, this is very recent. And Rose knows the difference between the kind of problems the law can prevent and the kind it can't. No law can prevent people from not trusting you. And for Rose to do her job well, she needs the trust of her students and their parents.

Rose also wishes she could be more open for the sake of her students. As in every classroom everywhere, some of her students will find they are gay, lesbian or bisexual. Some are like Rose was as a teenager–confused, lonely, quiet. Others are testing the waters more openly. They want open discussion. They are ready to be themselves. Is their school ready to accept them as they are?

Rose can't help answer this. She can't answer the question for herself. For now, she travels between her two worlds every day. She goes home to a stable relationship, a full life with a partner, family and friends.

At school she is the woman who has no life outside her work. She hardly ever talks about her weekends, her social life. There's an empty space on her desk where most people would keep a picture of a loved one. She knows this must all change soon.

Some Things Worth Thinking About...

- ❑ In our society, heterosexuals have privilege. Heterosexuals do not have to justify or explain their relationships. Heterosexuals do not have to answer the question: "So, what do you think made you turn out heterosexual?" Our society and media show male/female sexuality as "normal." Anyone not in a male/female relationship is thought to be "not normal."
- ❑ Homophobia can take many forms. It can be mistrust of gays or lesbians around children, although over 90% of child molesters are heterosexual. It can be "gay-bashing," a kind of hate crime. Gay-bashing can include verbal and physical abuse.
- ❑ We all live complex lives in which we play many roles. But often images of or talk about homosexuality focus on sex only. This stereotype denies people the right to be seen as fully human.
- ❑ It is illegal to discriminate against someone because they are gay, lesbian or bisexual. But this does not stop discrimination. For example, some churches feel free to discriminate because they believe homosexual relationships are "sinful." It is very hard to fight this type of discrimination.
- ❑ More than 90% of gay and lesbian youth have been verbally or physically assaulted because of their sexual orientation.

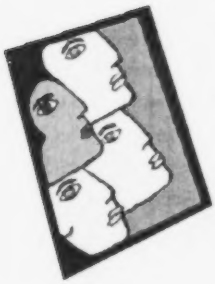
Our society and media show male/female sexuality as "normal."

What Can Any of Us Do?

- ❑ We can realize that wherever we are, there are likely to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered people. This is what is "normal." We can try not to assume that everyone is heterosexual. We can use inclusive language like "people and their partners" instead of "husbands and wives."
- ❑ We can challenge people who make jokes or slurs about gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered people.
- ❑ We can stop claiming heterosexual privilege. Often people say things like, "I believe in Live and Let Live, but mind you, I'm not a lesbian." Why do we say these things?
- ❑ We can oppose homophobia in our workplaces, schools, churches and community organizations.
- ❑ We can support laws that give gays and lesbians full equality in society. This includes policies that give same-sex couples the same benefits as others.
- ❑ We can provide safe spaces for our youth to explore and express their sexual orientation.

ABLEISM

A SLOW WALK IN THE MOUNTAINS



Sara leaves work in plenty of time to get to the 3:10 meeting. She gives herself a half hour, even though it is only a few streets away. There's some lumpy ice on the sidewalks today. She might have to make a detour around it. Sometimes the crutches are enough to make her feel secure, but winter walking is always tricky. Some days it's like a slow walk in the mountains.

When she gets to the school, there are ten steep steps to get from the schoolyard to the door. The door itself is heavy and hard to open. She hopes she will be able to manage it, or that someone will be there to open it if she can't. She remembers from last time that there's a buzzer. That's not as good as an automatic door. With an automatic door, you're independent, Sara thinks. You go in on your own terms. A buzzer makes you wait. It makes you depend on someone else. Sara would prefer not to have to get help. After all, she has a perfect right to be here. She has her son's report card in her bag. She's here to talk about it.

The teacher's note made Sara a little worried, but it also made her smile. The teacher said she had some concerns about how long it took Ryan to complete some tasks. Sara smiled because it made her think about slowness. Sara knows slowness inside out. In a way, Sara's life story is all about slowness and speed, and people's ideas about them.

Sara was born with cerebral palsy (CP). CP affects how her body moves and how her muscles work. It has to do with messages from the brain to the body, and from the body to the brain. Sara's has always had difficulty walking. It was hard for her to learn to write because of lack of control of her hands. As a child, she had trouble with speech. Speech therapy helped. Sometimes, though, people stopped listening before Sara had made herself understood. Then they thought she had nothing to say.

In her small community when Sara was a child, she was the only one with CP. The children at school stared at her. Some called her a "cripple." Sometimes they made fun of her speech and movements. Adults spoke to her slowly, as if this would help her understand them.

No one expected much from Sara. Her teachers and her parents supported her, but they could not see what was going on behind Sara's slow movements and speech. Like many people, they couldn't see the workings of her lively mind. They stopped listening to the joke before she got to the punch line. It was about this time that Sara lost herself in books. Books waited for her and let her enter and exit different worlds whenever she pleased. And it was books in the end that took her away from her small community and into university. Her parents were terrified.

Today Sara works in a new program that helps employers make their workplaces more accessible to people with disabilities. She thinks it's funny that someone who does her job has to face this heavy door now. She and her husband Rick put Ryan here because the school is in their neighbourhood. The principal has said she's sorry about the problems with access, but it's an old school and there is no money to make it accessible. Sara has pointed out that this causes inequalities. Children without

disabilities can go to school in their own neighbourhood. Children with disabilities do not have that choice.

Although such things make Sara angry, she reminds herself that it takes time. She chips away at barriers one by one. Once people were impatient at Sara's slowness. Now she is impatient with theirs. Why can't they see? Why can't things change? Why is money an excuse for denying people access?

She pulls on the heavy door, then gives up and rings the buzzer. She waits.

Some Things Worth Thinking About...

- ❑ There are many kinds of physical and mental disabilities. Some are more visible than others. DISABILITIES CAN ARRIVE AT ANY TIME IN OUR LIVES. Perhaps we should all think of ourselves as "temporarily abled."
- ❑ We are all different. We all have different powers, abilities and talents. We need to remember that such differences always exist when we think of "ability" and "disability."
- ❑ People are not their disabilities. We should not refer to them as "the disabled." They are "people with disabilities." The disability is only one aspect of the whole person.
- ❑ People with disabilities have the same needs, wants, desires, faults and human rights as people who do not have them. Having a disability does not mean that a person should be more patient than others, should not want sex, or should not have a family because it's too hard.
- ❑ People with disabilities are less limited by their disabilities than they are by lack of access, services and supports.

PERHAPS WE SHOULD THINK OF OURSELVES AS "TEMPORARILY ABLED."

What Can Any of Us Do?

- ❑ We can educate ourselves about disabilities.
- ❑ We can speak out when access is denied to someone. We can examine and change the spaces where we work. We can decide to meet, organize and celebrate in accessible spaces. We can educate ourselves about how to create access and include all people.
- ❑ WE CAN RESPECT EACH OTHER. We can treat people with disabilities the way we ourselves want to be treated. When a person with a disability has a caregiver, we should not ignore that person and speak to the caregiver. We should not treat people as if they cannot understand or make decisions because they have a disability.
- ❑ We cannot accept shortage of funds as a reason for denying people access.
- ❑ We can realize that it is illegal to discriminate against someone because of a disability. We can file a complaint if we are discriminated against.

Ageism

Three Generations, Six Tired Feet

Abby Green walks right past her son, Bill, and goes into her room. "Hi Bill, don't ask," she says as she closes the door.

"Trina, what happened to your Nan?" Bill asks.

"I think shopping took the good out of her," Trina says. Trina is Abby's granddaughter and Bill's daughter. She lays the bags down by the daybed. She fills the kettle and puts it on the stove.

"Did she get her shoes?" Bill asks.

"Well, yeah," Trina says. "But not without a scrap."

"A scrap?" Bill asks. "Tell me. This should be good."

They were in the shopping centre Abby hardly ever went to. It was an hour away and Abby found it too bright and too loud, not at all the kind of place she liked to shop. But she needed new shoes and it was the best place to get them.

They walked into the sports store. A young salesperson walked up to them. He looked directly at Trina. "Can I help you find something?" he asked.

"Actually, it's her who's looking," said Trina. She stepped aside.

The young man looked at Abby. "Oh, sorry, ma'am," he said. "How can I help you?"

Abby told him what she wanted. They were the same shoes she'd been buying for ten years. "I find them the best," she said.

The young man looked at her. "They're runners," he said. He looked at Trina, "I might be able to find her something more suitable. We have some really good walking shoes."

That was the thing that got to Abby. There she was, with her money ready to spend. She walked the whole distance around the harbour every day. She had lived long enough to know what she wanted. But the young man still looked past her. He still talked to her granddaughter.

This was happening to Abby more and more now. More and more people looked past her and spoke to someone else with her. Sometimes people spoke too loudly to her or not at all.

Trina and Bill sit and drink their tea. "That's the problem," Bill says, "people just assume she's not as sharp as she is. They think she's less able because she's old." Bill himself has had a brush with that kind of thinking, even though he's only fifty-three. When the fishery closed, Bill looked hard for work. There was very little. He applied for training positions, but didn't get those. One employer told him he was only investing training time and money in young workers. Bill had the feeling the man was thinking, he's over forty, he only ever worked at one thing, he's not going to adapt to something new. Bill found himself stuck with a tag: Older Worker.

If Trina stopped to think about it, she too has been stereotyped because of her age. How many times did Mr. Dean drive the teenagers away from his store, saying he

"didn't want trouble" and they were "bothering people coming in." It was no good telling him they were only standing around. He looked past them, saw an idea instead of people. If one of his windows was broken, he said he'd know where to look.

Some Things Worth Thinking About...

- There are many stereotypes about older people: that they are weak, stubborn, a danger to themselves and others. There are also stereotypes about young people: that they are careless, disrespectful etc. There seem to be stereotypes for just about every stage of human life. Do these stereotypes seem like the people you know?
- If we don't challenge stereotypes about age, we will become the victims of those stereotypes. It's only a matter of time.
- Stereotypes of older people as a "burden" or "unsound" can lead to elder abuse. It is easier to abuse people we do not consider as equals. Frustrated relatives or caregivers may strike out. The abuse can be verbal, physical, psychological, sexual or financial.
- Some elderly people will put up with abuse because they are afraid to report it, afraid to cause trouble in the family, or afraid of losing their house and money. People should know that elder abuse is always wrong and often illegal. No one has to put up with it.
- Young people and elderly people have more in common than they often realize. Other people think they should not have sexual feelings. Other people try to make decisions for them. People say they are a drain on the finances of the family and the country. People think both groups use too many drugs. Some people think the young are stubborn and the old are stuck in their ways. All of these ideas are stereotypes.

What Can Any of Us Do?

- We can question ageist language and images when we come across them. We can all find examples of people who do not fit stereotypes.
- We can treat all people of all ages with respect. Even small children have their own tastes and can make choices. "Over the hill" is an attitude, not an age.
- We can speak out against media attention that labels young people as trouble, and against those who try to deal with troubled young lives by making stiffer punishments.
- When we hear people say, "Who can pay for the care of our ageing population?" we can answer it. We can say that most people have already paid their way through their work and their taxes. We can point out that everyone pays taxes–HST–every day. We can say it is not just elderly people who need looking after. We can support good services for everyone.
- We can be aware of our human rights at any age. We can share what we know. We can speak out when our rights or those of others are denied.

It is easier to abuse people we do not consider as equals.

CLASSISM

EVERYONE'S GOT SOMETHING TO SAY

It's the day after a federal budget, and it's all the talk on Open Line. A woman caller had said that the tax cuts and other changes would not help the people who needed help the most. She said the poorest people would not gain a thing.

Now a man was on the radio. He sounded angry. "That crowd on welfare," he said. "They're never satisfied. Always complaining. It doesn't matter what the government does for them. Well, I worked all my life. I never got nothing for nothing. I think they got it too good."

Sharon flicks off the radio. She knows what the man will say next. She's heard it all before. She knows all the attitudes that lie behind it. For most of her adult life, Sharon has been a member of the working poor. Either that or she's been unemployed. One thing Sharon has learned from being poor is that people don't mind telling you what you need. They don't mind giving you advice. People always say, *The rich are different*. Sharon figures that besides having money, what the rich have is privacy. No one tells them how to live.

Sharon has been told many things. She's been told that the right training and the right attitude would land her a good job. This was not true. She took a secretarial course and computer operator training, but all she got were those trainee positions where the government provides employers with workers at low cost. Once the training period ended, she had to move on. She'd get on UI, then it would run out. She'd end up on welfare, then get a training course. The cycle would start again.

One of Sharon's job counselors said Sharon might not have a positive attitude. But Sharon figures she wouldn't have survived so long without being positive. She wonders why everyone is trying to avoid the truth: *there are more people looking for jobs than there are jobs for them.* Besides, she knows lots of people with bad attitudes and good jobs.

Sharon lights a smoke. She knows what the fellow on Open Line would say: *Sure, they're smoking and drinking all their money.* But for Sharon sometimes a cigarette has been the only thing to help her relax from all the stress. At times, a smoke has taken the edge off her hunger too.

People have tried to tell Sharon how to stretch her money. They give her recipes and hints. Didn't they know she could make soup for eight for less than $2.00? She'd be happy to give *them* the recipe. She knows every bargain, trick and freebie to be found. But a dollar only stretches so far before it breaks.

Sharon has at times kept her family of three together and fed on $600.00 a month. Now that's a skill not everyone has. Maybe she should write a book about it. It seems to her that the way things are going, a lot of people might have to learn to live with less.

What Sharon hates most is all the bragging and blame–some people claiming to work harder than others and saying that they are more deserving of a good life. Saying that people like her are just lazy or uneducated or wasteful. Sharon often thinks about Newfoundland's long history of hardship and poverty and hard work. *How can anyone here think, she wonders, that it is poor people who are to blame for poverty?*

Some Things Worth Thinking About...

- Many people blame poverty on poor people. They say they are lazy, want handouts, are too out of shape or drink too much to work. Many Newfoundlanders heard such things said about them after the cod moratorium. Some Newfoundlanders said these things too. They were people who were also losing their jobs. When we take part in this kind of talk, we all become losers. We blame people with little power for problems created by people with a lot of power.
- There's a saying: "Follow the money." Every time someone loses, someone else profits. We need to identify who this is. Why are big companies making more money than ever while the world's poorest people get poorer? Why do governments allow big corporations to come in, use people for labour, then take the profits and leave for somewhere where the labour is cheaper? We need to see the big picture.
- When we blame unemployment on people, we have to remember that 10% of the people in this province have never had work. Job shortage was and is the main cause of unemployment.
- We need to tell our governments that in a rich country like Canada, the level of poverty we have is shameful. We need better policies and programs and better jobs.
- In Canada, poverty is the biggest factor in the failure of children to do well in school. If we say, "the poor will always be with us," we are saying that these children do not have equal rights to an education. Poverty is also the biggest factor in having poor health and dying early.

What Can Any of Us Do?

- We can look at poverty as a problem of the distribution of wealth and work, not a personal problem.

We need better policies and programs and better jobs.

- We can question and challenge stereotypes of poor people when we come across them.
- We can make good services and better jobs an issue in every election.
- We can refuse to take part in "poor-bashing"– a form of abuse that blames poor people for poverty and stereotypes them. We can challenge media stereotypes about "abusing the system." Welfare fraud is much less common than tax fraud. And the gains from the crime are much smaller.

- We can lobby to get "source of income" put in provincial human rights laws. That way, it would be illegal to discriminate against someone just because they're on EI or welfare.

One Ism and Another and...

This booklet has looked at sexism, racism, heterosexism, ableism, ageism and classism. Though we've talked about them separately, that is not always the way they work.

Oppression can create one barrier or many. If you are an elderly woman on a fixed income, you will likely have to deal with three sets of stereotypes. Racism and sexism often go together. It sounds like a hard battle to fight. Is it possible to win?

Oppression only works as long as we believe the lies and myths about ourselves and others. Then we behave as if the lies are true. We feel alone and powerless. The first step to changing this is to challenge the lies.

Lifting the Weight of Oppression

We don't have to accept oppression. We can challenge it by what we say and do every day. We can question the lies and find deeper truths. Knowledge is power. We can talk to others as we question our assumptions. We can refuse to believe that the way things are is the way they must be.

Each step toward change lifts the weight of oppression a little. The more we think and talk, the less alone we feel. We can find support and good feedback. We can begin to find our own power. In this way, any of us can help to make huge changes, one thought and action at a time.

The Will to Change: A Newfoundland Example

Sometimes a history of oppression can make us feel that it is useless to try to change things. But we have already made great and positive changes in our society. Not too long ago, Catholics and Protestants were like separate countries in Newfoundland and Labrador. Name-calling and stereotypes were common. Employers could post signs saying, "No Catholics Need Apply." Marriages between Catholics and Protestants were family scandals.

When we look at our society now, we can see how far we've come. We challenged and moved beyond the stereotypes and prejudices based on religion, and did it in a single generation Our society has been made better by this change. If we can do this, what else might we change?

The Power of Community

Any time we question powerful stereotypes, we need allies. There are many good ones. The final section in this book is a list of resources. These are organizations that you can go to for information and support. These resources, in turn, can lead to others. They can lead us to a sense of a community, a sense that we are not alone.

Resources and Sources

The following is a list of some well-established provincial or national organizations that provide information and/or services. Each resource listed here can supply you with free or inexpensive information. Each offers a range of information or services. Each can refer you to other organizations and other resources. All were used in researching this booklet.

All Issues/General Resources

Newfoundland-Labrador Human Rights Association
155 Water St., Suite 206
P.O. Box 6203
St. John's, NF A1C 6J9
Phone/Fax: 709-754-0690
E-mail: nlhra@nf.sympatico.ca Web site: http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/nlhra

The Newfoundland-Labrador Human Rights Association promotes, educates and advocates for human rights. It has a wide range of resources available free of charge, including copies of the human rights code and other human rights documents. It has a number of resource readers which are available free of charge and can be ordered or downloaded from the web site. They are *The Way We Are: A Cross Cultural Education Reader, Freedom and Responsibility: A Human Rights Reader, The Road Untravelled: An Economic Rights Reader* and *Into a New Light: A Literacy and Human Rights Reader.* A resource handbook, Dismantling Homophobia, for teachers, guidance counselors and social workers who work with young people will be available soon. The web site also has a section called 14 Not Forgotten, dedicated to the victims of the Montreal Massacre. People can also call the office for information or drop in.

Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission
345/347 Duckworth St. (Terra Nova Place), 4th Floor
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NF A1B 4J6
Phone: 709-729-2709, 709-729-5812 or Toll-free: 1-800-563-5808
Fax: 709-729-0790
E-mail: humanright@mplace.elr.gov.nf.ca Web site: http://www.gov.nf.ca/hrc

The Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission works to enforce the Human Rights Code and to promote awareness of human rights. A person who believes she or he has been discriminated against under the Human Rights

Code can contact the Commission to make a complaint. You can make a complaint up to six months after the act you think is discriminatory occurred. The Commission will investigate the complaint. There is no charge for this service.

National Film Board of Canada
Phone toll-free: 1-800-267-7710
Web site: http://www.nfb.ca

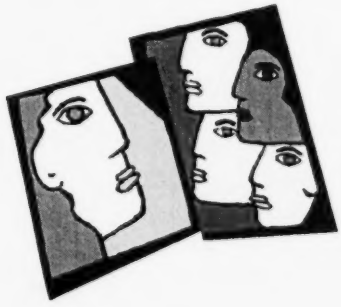
The National Film Board of Canada has a wide range of films available on video, including many that explore the issues discussed in this booklet. You can call the toll-free number above to get a catalogue, or find a good film by going through the web site listings by topic. NFB films are also available through public libraries in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Provincial Public Libraries, Newfoundland and Labrador
Contact your local branch or the web site: http://www.publib.nf.ca

Public libraries have always been good sources of print information. But they have much more. They have a large collection of NFB videos. Videos not available at your local library can be ordered through interlibrary loan. All public libraries are now on the Internet, and offer free Internet access to library users. Library staff can show you how to use the Internet if you don't know how. That way, you can access the sites noted here, and many others.

Respectful Workplace Co-ordinator
Employee & Departmental Services Division
Public Service Commission
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
P.O. Box 8700
Confederation Building
St. John's, NF A1B 4J6
Phone: 709-729-5891 Fax: 709-727-6234

The Respectful Workplace Program provides public information, support and referral around issues of respect in the workplace. It offers conflict resolution support for public service staff as well as consultation for businesses throughout the province.



Ableism/Disabilities

Independent Living Resource Centre
4 Escasoni Place
St. John's, NF A1C 3R6
Phone:709-722-4031 TTY: 709-722-7998 Fax: 709-722-0147
E-mail: info@ilrc.nf.ca Web site: http://www.ilrc.nf.ca

The Independent Living Resource Centre offers resources, supports and opportunities to people who have any type(s) of disability. The ILRC helps people stay in control of their choices and decisions. Programs include information and networking, individual advocacy, peer support, volunteer opportunities and Independent Living skills training. The ILRC also promotes Independent Living and the rights of persons with disabilities through public presentations, workshops and community research. The web site has extensive links and is a good guide to other resources and organizations.

Coalition of Persons with Disabilities (COD)
4 Escasoni Place
St. John's, NF A1C 3R6
Phone: 709-722-7011 TTY: 709-722-7998 Fax: 709-722-4424
E-mail: codmain@nf.aibn.com Web site: http://www.indie.ca/cod

The Coalition of Persons with Disabilities (COD) is a provincial, cross-disability consumer group that advocates for the rights of all persons with disabilities at local, regional, provincial and national levels. COD concentrates its resources on information and advocacy, rather than service delivery. It works with other organizations and government departments and committees to remove barriers faced by persons with disabilities. COD has member groups throughout the province.

Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living
687 Water St. West
P.O. Box 5453, Stn. C
St. John's, NF A1C 5W4
Phone:709-722-0790 Fax: 709-722-1325

The Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living works with and on behalf of people with developmental disabilities and their families to develop welcoming communities. It provides direct supports and offers information and referrals. It has many local branches in the province, and can provide you with information about the the group nearest you.

Canadian Mental Health Association
354 Water Street, 3rd Floor
P.O. Box 5788
St. John's, NF A1C 5X3
Phone: 709-753-8550 Fax: 709-753-8537
E-mail: cmha@public.nfld.com
Web site: http://www.infonet.st-john's.nf.ca/providers/cmha.html

The Canadian Mental Health Association promotes understanding of mental health and mental illness. It has a wide range of resources including books, videos and pamphlets. It offers counselling and self-help information and referral. The CMHA also offers seminars on many topics.

CHANNAL
354 Water St.
P.O. Box 5788
St. John's, NF A1C 5X3
Phone: 709-753-5111 Fax: 709-753-8537

The Consumer Health Awareness Network of Newfoundland and Labrador (CHANNAL) is a self-help support network serving the needs of mental health consumers in the province. It offers support and educational resources and does public education and advocacy.

Canadian Paraplegic Association
168 Majors Path
P.O. Box 21284
St. John's, NF A1A 5G6
Phone: 709-753-5901 Fax: 709-753-4224
E-mail: cpacb@atcon.com

CPA Newfoundland and Labrador promotes rehabilitation and educational and job opportunities for people with spinal cord injuries and physical disabilities. It offers counselling, information and referral services. There are offices in several towns in the province; contact the CPA for the one nearest you.

Ageism

The Seniors Resource Centre
Suite W240, Prince Charles Building
120 Torbay Road, St. John's, NF A1A 2G8
Phone: 709-737-2333 Toll-free: 1-800-563-5599 Fax: 709-737-3717
E-mail: seniorsresource@aibn.com
Web site: http://www.infonet.st-johns.nf.ca/providers/seniors

The Seniors Resource Centre promotes the independence and well-being of older adults by providing information, advocacy and a variety of programs and services. Its toll-free Information and Referral Line works to put seniors and others concerned with seniors in touch with helpful services and resources. The Centre distributes a wide range of print information, and has workshops, videos and programs on issues ranging from becoming senior-friendly to Elder Abuse.

Classism

Oxfam Centre
382 Duckworth St.
P.O. Box 5125
St. John's, NF A1C 5V5
Phone: 709-753-2202 Fax: 709-753-4110
E-mail: stjohns@oxfam.ca Web site: http://www.oxfam.ca

Oxfam is an international development agency fighting poverty by helping people help themselves. It provides information, educational materials and presentations on social and economic development in Newfoundland, Canada and the Third World. It also has good links with other agencies, community groups and activists.

National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO)
440-325 Dalhousie St.
Ottawa, ON K1N 7G2
Phone: 613-789-0096 Fax: 613-789-0141
E-mail: napo@web.net Web site: http://www.napo-onap.ca

NAPO is a non-profit organization that represents the interests of low-income Canadians. It is directed by activists working within low-income communities. Its priorities are access to a living income, health, housing, educational opportunities and decision-making. It has a great deal of free information, including articles and fact sheets and information on how to fight classism and poor-bashing. The web site has many links to other resources. Contact the national office to find Newfoundland members/representatives.

National Council of Welfare
1010 Somerset St. West, 2nd Floor
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0J9
Phone: 613-957-2961 Fax: 613-957-2961
E-mail: ncw@magi.com Web site: http://www.ncwcnbes.net

The National Council of Welfare is a citizens' advisory body to the Minister of Human Resources Development Canada. It advises the Minister on the needs and problems of low-income Canadians, and reports on how policy and programs affect their welfare. The NCW both collects and gives out information. It has many publications and all are free; most are also in public libraries. Any citizen who is concerned about their own poverty or the poverty of others can make their views known to the federal government through the NCW.

Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD)
441 MacLaren St.
Ottawa, ON K2P 2H3
Phone: 613-236-8977 Fax: 613-236-2750
E-mail: council@ccsd.ca Web site: http://www.ccsd.ca

The CCSD is a national, non-profit organization promoting better social and economic equality for all Canadians. Its main activity is research; its main product is information. It has a variety of publications, some at a cost, others free. The web site has a great deal of information about poverty and economic and social issues, as well as links to other organizations.

Heterosexism

Newfoundland Gays and Lesbians for Equality (NGALE)
P.O. Box 6221
St. John's, NF Canada A1C 6J9
Phone: 709-753-4297 [753-GAYS]
E-mail: ngale@geocities.com
Web site: http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/4291

NGALE is a community-based, not-for-profit volunteer organization which provides support and education to and for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, as well as the general public. It has a newsletter, Outlook, and many other resources, including The Pride Guide, an extensive list of resources in the province as well as L/B/G/T-friendly businesses. The web site is part of a larger resource network, and has many links to other resources. NGALE holds regular meetings and has several support groups and services, including:

The Lesbian/Bisexual/Gay/Transgendered Support and Information Line: 709-753-4297 [753-GAYS]. Trained male and female volunteers offer consultation between 7 and 10 PM, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Calls are confidential.

The Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgendered/Questioning Youth Group meets every month. Call the Support and Information Line or the Women's Centre (709-753-0220) for information.

Parents and Family/Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). Call the Support and Information Line for referral.

Racism

Canadian Race Relations Foundation
4900 Yonge St., Suite 1305
Willowdale, ON M2N 6A4
Phone toll-free: 1-888-240-4936 Fax toll-free: 1-888-399-0333
E-mail: info@crr.ca Web site: http://www.crr.ca

The Canadian Race Relations Foundation works to build a national framework for the fight against racism in Canada through information sharing, public awareness and research. Its web site has an extensive collection of bibliographies, articles and fact sheets on racism, as well as links to other agencies and organizations across Canada.

First Nations Resource Centre
Assembly of First Nations
One Nicholas St., Suite 1002
Ottawa, ON K1N 7B7
Phone: 613-241-6789 Fax: 613-241-5808
E-mail: kwhiteduck@afn.ca Web site: http://www.afc.ca

The Resource Centre provides information services to First Nations, the general public and researchers. The collection has over 50,000 items related to First Nations' rights and issues in Canada. The Assembly of First Nations web site also has extensive links to other organizations and resources.

Labrador Friendship Centre
49 Grenfell St.
P.O. Box 767, Station B
Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador A0P 1E0
Phone: 709-896-8302 or 709-896-8341 Fax: 709-896-8731
Web site: http://www.nafc-aboriginal.com/pages/nfld.html

The Labrador Friendship Centre has a wide variety of programs and services to assist aboriginal people moving to or living in the area. It also works to promote communication and understanding between aboriginal people and community service agencies.

St. John's Native Friendship Centre Association
61 Cashin Ave.
St. John's, NF A1E 3B4
Phone: 709-726-5902 Fax: 709-726-3557
Web site: http://www.nafc-aboriginal.com/pages/nfld.html

The St. John's Native Friendship Centre Association provides services and facilities to native people and others requiring assistance and orientation to the city. It also provides personal support, advocacy and counseling to individuals and families. SJNFCA also does public education by visiting elementary schools to conduct presentations on aboriginal cultures.

Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador
P.O. Box 23053
St. John's, NF A1B 4J9
Phone: 709-754-0112

The Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador provides guidance, support, information and services to women of different cultures. It helps women make the transition to a new cultural setting and promotes cross-cultural understanding. It has produced a free guide for service providers called Working with the Abused Immigrant Visible Minority Women.

Sexism

Women's Policy Office
4th Floor, West Block, Confederation Building
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NF A1B 4J6
Phone: 709-729-5009 Fax: 709-729-2331
E-mail: WPO@mail.gov.nf.ca Web site: http://www.gov.nf.ca/exec/wpo

The Women's Policy Office is a provincial agency that deals with issues related to women's equality. It works to get women's issues into government policy-making. It also deals with other equality rights, forms of discrimination and ways of dealing with them. It has a wide range of free publications, including reports, educational materials, booklets, brochures, information sheets and posters. It has a library where print material can be viewed but not borrowed. Films from the library can be borrowed.

Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women
131 LeMarchant Road
St. John's, NF A1C 2H3
Phone: 709-753-7270 Fax: 709-753-2606
E-mail: pacsw@nf.aibn.com Web site: http://www.pacsw.com

The Provincial Advisory Council is an organization for consultation, advocacy, lobbying and information on matters related to the status of women. It has a resource information centre and produces a bi-monthly news bulletin. It provides booklets, brochures and workshops to the public. The Advisory Council also has a listing of women's centres throughout the province.

The St. John's Status of Women Council/The Women's Centre
83 Military Road
St. John's, NF A1C 2C8
Phone: 709-753-0220 Fax: 709-753-3817
E-mail: sjswc@nfld.com Web site: http://www.members.tripod.com/sjswc/sjswc.html

Bay St. George Status of Women Council/The Women's Centre
P.O. Box 501
Stephenville, NF A2N 3B4
Phone: 709-743-4444 Fax 709-643-4707 E-mail: bsgswc@nf.sympatico.ca

Corner Brook Status of Women Council/The Women's Centre
P.O. Box 373
Corner Brook, NF A2H 6E3
Phone: 709-639-8522 Fax 709-639-1093 E-Mail: cbswc@thezone.net

Gander Status of Women Council/The Women's Centre
P.O. Box 246
Gander, NF A1V 1W6
Phone: 709-256-4395 Fax: 709-256-3644 E-Mail: womengander@nf.sympatico.ca

Gateway Status of Women Council/The Women's Centre
P.O. Box 1359
Port aux Basques, NF A0M 1C0
Phone: 709-695-7505 Fax: 709-695-9756 E-Mail: gatewaywomen@thezone.net

Labrador West Status of Women Council/The Women's Centre
P.O. Box 171
Labrador City, NF A2V 2K5
Phone: 709-944-6562 Fax: 709-944-4078

Mokami Status of Women Council/The Women's Centre
P.O. Box 329, Station B
Happy Valley, NF A0P 1E0
Phone: 709-896-3484 Fax: 709-896-3484

Women's Centres provide information, referrals, support and safe, friendly gathering places for women. They have extensive links to other women's and advocacy groups as well as to community and government agencies and services.

Status of Women Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador Region
10 Barter's Hill, 8th floor
Cabot Place, Phase 2
St. John's, NF A1C 6M1
Phone: 709-772-5655
Web site (national): http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca

Status of Women Canada is the federal government agency that promotes gender equality and the full participation of women in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the country. SWC and has many publications and other resources, as well as links to other agencies. It also has the Florence Bird Memorial Library; requests for information can be made online.